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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
6 April 1953

The current shift in tactics probably springs from the Kremlin's recognition that the stalemate on all major East-West issues and particularly that in Korea has not been serving its objectives and that growing Western military strength prevents new Communist military ventures. By adopting a more conciliatory position, Moscow probably hopes to obtain a reopening of negotiations on various outstanding East-West issues. The new regime may await the outcome of its hints of willingness to settle some issues and then make such concessions as are necessary to break the East-West stalemate.

There is no evidence to suggest that these tactics stem from any basic weakness in the Malenkov regime's position within the USSR. The subdued vigilance campaign, the amnesty decree, and price reductions all seem intended to prove the liberality of the new leaders, to increase the regime's stock at home and to build up morale.

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The recent overtures designed to break the stalemate in the Korean armistice negotiations probably reflect a decision by the new Soviet regime that the disadvantages involved in a continuation of the Korean war outweigh the advantages they had hoped to obtain by forcing the deadlock on the prisoners of war issue. The overwhelming UN support of the Indian resolution which recognized the principle of voluntary repatriation apparently convinced the Soviet leaders that they could not longer hope to produce a serious cleavage in the Western coalition or between non-Communist Asian states and the West by maintaining the deadlock.

Sino-Soviet proposals on Korea do not represent any major change in the strategic objectives of the Communist bloc. They represent a tactical withdrawal from a now untenable position. Current indications suggest that the major Communist effort will now be directed toward a more consistent and flexible program to achieve basic cold war objectives--the consolidation and strengthening of the Soviet bloc and the disruption and weakening of the Western coalition. The new regime probably feels an immediate need to reduce external pressures on the Communist bloc in order to gain time in which to establish its authority throughout the Orbit.

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